

The 17th Century Open Notes (1625-1700)

Timeline:

- Charles I becomes king in 1625
- Civil War in England in 1642
- Charles I is beheaded in 1649; Oliver Cromwell becomes Lord Protector of the England
- 1650: tea is first drunk in England
- Oliver Cromwell dissolves Parliament, prohibits Anglican services (1655)
- Cromwell dies in 1658 and his son Richard succeeds him
- 1660 ends the Protectorate and Charles II is restored to the throne in 1661
- Isaac Newton experiments on gravity in 1665
- 1666 marks the Great Fire of London
- 1685: Charles II dies and James II succeeds his brother
- 1688: Glorious Revolution—overthrow of James II and accession of William and Mary

Political and Religious Upheavals:

- “divine right” is questioned
- Charles I’s insistence on divine right alienated Parliament (who had a large Puritan faction); he often ignored Parliament altogether
- Civil War broke out between the king’s supporters called the “royalists” or “cavaliers” and the Parliamentary forces called the “roundheads”
- Oliver Cromwell (a Puritan member of Parliament) brought victory to the roundheads and ended the monarchy in 1649—they beheaded the king
- Cromwell was essentially a dictator, though (a firm, moralist and Puritan)
- England’s first non-royal ruler—known as Lord Protector of the Commonwealth; ruled for 9 violent years
- After his son Richard’s rule (which failed), the Stuart king, Charles II, was restored to the throne—this period is often called “The Restoration.”
- James II (Charles II’s son) rule was too harsh and he was removed in a nonviolent revolution where he fled into exile and his daughter, Mary, and her Dutch husband, Prince William of Orange, were offered the British throne

Life:

- London grows to 600,000 occupants
- 1665: the Great Plague sweeps London, leaving 68,000 dead
- 1666: the Great Fire consumes 13,200 houses, 400 streets, and 90 of London’s 101 churches
- much growth in the textile industry (child labor being a large part if you were poor)
- rich family’s children often could read, write, and translate both Latin and Greek by age 5

Literature:

- Poetry dominates the early literature of the century
- *Metaphysical poetry* (led by John Donne) is a complex, highly intellectual verse filled with intricate and far-fetched metaphors
- John Milton writes *Paradise Lost*, a work of over 10,000 lines
- John Bunyan writes *The Pilgrim's Progress* (long, prose work with imaginary characters)
- Izaak Walton wrote a fantastic manual on fishing called *The Compleat Angler*